

13 September 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Joint Meeting of "B" Teams - 9 September 1976

1. Attendees:

Richard Pipes
General Graham
General Vogt
Thomas Wolfe
Paul Wolfowitz
Jim Drake
Roland Herbst
Charles Lerch

2. The meeting was called to exchange information on the full scope of the Team B effort.

3. Richard Pipes spoke briefly about the work of the Strategic Policies and Objectives Team. (See Memorandum for the Record, 26 August 1976 and 8 September 1976)

4. Roland Herbst spoke on ICBM accuracy. He said that the panel is concerned primarily with the accuracy of new Soviet systems, specifically the SS 16, 17, 18, and 19. His group believes that these systems were designed to be highly accurate. The level of accuracy can not be determined from design; accuracy depends on the quality of the guidance system. His group believes the Soviet instruments are better than the NIE estimates. No data is available on the quality of the guidance systems used in the SS 18 and SS 19. But Herbst and members of his group believe the Soviets are working hard to improve the accuracy of these systems.

Herbst noted that the Soviets test their missiles from operational silos. The US does not and this gives the Soviets an advantage. Graham agreed with this point and added that the theoretical accuracy of system does not interest a soldier; he is interested in the wartime effectiveness of a system.

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5. Charles Lerch spoke on the subject of Soviet low altitude air defense. The basic question for his group is what is the strategic defense capability of the Soviet Union.

Lerch criticized the NIE for making a net assessment of the Soviet low altitude defense capability. He said

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Drake said that the Soviets have a large number of air defense weapons and could greatly reduce the number of penetrators - probably to about 10 - 15% of the original force. Lerch noted that each air defense installation would have to handle one or at the most two penetrators at one time. [REDACTED]

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Drake said that Soviet exercises do not emphasize low altitude air defense as much as we think they should. However, Lerch countered that the number of such exercises is increasing.

Lerch and Drake agreed that a small number of defense posts have been identified but more could exist.

On the air defense problem both said there is too much data to evaluate in the time available. Even in the intelligence community, more data exists than have been thoroughly analyzed.

6. During general discussion of the Strategic Policies and Objectives report, Wolfe repeated his belief that the NIE tendency to underestimate Soviet capabilities is a cyclical - periods of underestimation follow period of overestimation. Political pressure is another factor in the cycle. He also said that the Soviets have a belief in the inevitable victory of communism and believe that the mind is the ultimate target.

Wolfe and Graham agreed that the Soviet view of the strategic balance considers more than military hardware. The Soviet view includes the "correlation of forces". As another example of the difference between US and Soviet thinking, Wolfe said the Soviets are concerned with how to win a war while the US is concerned with how to prevent a war.

Graham said that he believes the US has three important advantages over the Soviet Union: a superior economy, superior technology and better morale. Vogt generally agreed but noted that in the strategic area some believe the Soviets have achieved parity with the US and in some fields may be ahead. In any case, the Soviets are making a concerted effort to achieve a technological breakthrough.

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